6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

In the more serious cases of adult disputes, force and physical punishment were employed if gossip failed. In cases of murder, a revenge killing might take place if a high payment was not offered in retribution and accepted. A person who disrupted the summer hunt might be beaten and have his clothing and weapons destroyed. An adulterous woman might have her nose cut off, or be put to death by the members of her husband's warrior society (Grinnell 1907:220, Ewers 1958:97–98; Wissler 1911:24–26 discuss specific punishments).

These forces contributed to the development of some general personality characteristics of the Blackfeet. Grinnell found them, like other Plains Indians, to be "talkative, merry, and lighthearted," and fond of joking, even though they appeared reserved and quiet when with strangers (Grinnell 1907:181). Wissler commented on their fondness for jest and practical jokes (Wissler 1911:52–53). In addition, I get a picture of a brave, resourceful people, industrious and aggressive, yet much concerned with self, jealous, and easily shamed. These characteristics and their expression were further reinforced by the Blackfeet beliefs.

Religion

While learning all these skills and rules, the young people were learning as well the beliefs that gave the practices validity, supported the rights and privileges of age, gave meaning to the Blackfeet world, and added supernatural reinforcement to the moral code.

All of the Blackfeet universe was invested with a pervasive supernatural power that could be met with in the natural environment. A man could seek and avail himself of this power through proper behavior and ritual. He went alone to a remote place to fast and pray, and to await the dream or vision that would transfer power to him. If he was successful the supernatural appeared to him, usually in animate form, and promised aid and success in all or specific endeavors, if the man in return would observe faithfully a series of taboos and periodically re-enact in ritual the experience by which he had received the power. The spirit-being instructed the petitioner to make a medicine bundle containing the symbols of his power and taught him the appropriate songs and rituals. The spirit was now his guardian and could be called upon for protection in times of trouble.

The powers, paraphernalia, and rituals became the personal property of the owner. He and the spirit dealt with each other as individuals, and any group benefits to be expected from this relationship were dependent on the inclinations of the individual owner. The complete power, bundle, songs, and ritual could be sold, or transferred, by one individual to another for a price. The owners of some bundles could sell short-term benefits of their power, as well, usually by going through the ceremony of the bundle for the benefit of an individual, the family, band, or tribe, or through the preparation of a charm to be used by the purchaser. Ewers relates how Wolf Calf acquired horse medicine power and how he used it, how he transferred parts of the power and how these parts and the bundle itself were transferred to a series of men from those days in the early nineteenth century on up into the time of Ewer's informants of the 1940s (Ewers 1955:258–261). The

and I find them dirty to eat." I started to cry because of it and my father right away looked and said: "What has happened to my girl?" My sister ran out of the house before she could be scolded.

My sister went away to boarding school before I did. That is when I learned the most about our old traditions and religion, because I was around my father all the time. My father and mother took very good care of their holy things, and my father learned all that he could about them. No wonder he grew to be a very old man. Nobody would think of ever going in front of him or in front of his altar. That was strictly forbidden in our religion.

Finally my sister and I were both at the boarding school, and we learned a lot of things from the nuns. They taught us about the modern ways of living, but even these are considered old-fashioned and becoming lost now. When we finished school we both got married and went to live in the homes of our mothers-in-law. And that was when we really learned how things were done and how life goes, after we got married. The rest was just training leading up to that, but our real life didn't start till after marriage and having children.

Mokakin's mother was really good at doing women's work, and she was pleasant to live with. It seemed to me that whatever she did turned out good. And she was very holy and knowledgeable in our religion, too. She and her husband had owned a lot of medicine bundles together. I used to just watch her beading and wonder how it always looked so perfect. I think I learned a lot about being a good wife and housekeeper from my husband's mother.

After I got married I became very lonesome for my father and mother. Even when we were all gathered at the Sun Dance grounds, my mother would camp far away from us and I would hardly see her. She was very old-fashioned, so she would not come anywhere near where her son-in-law was. She would come to our tipi very early in the morning and bring

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
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123 get to visit with all my different grandmothers—my actual relatives as well as those elders with whom I have become close friends. The Sun Dance encampment makes them feel really close to their old manner of living, so this is the best time for me to learn my grandmothers' ways. I try to prepare everything for my own household as well as I can before the Sun Dance, so that I will have lots of time to spend in helping and learning with my grandmothers. They are always glad to have someone come by and do little chores for them, and this is the best way to learn how to do traditional chores right.

186 I admire the dedication that my grandmothers show for their traditional ways. It makes me realize how really hard it is to overcome the way we younger people have been raised. Nowadays we have the freedom to keep on with the modern ways, or to live by our traditional ways, if we want to. Until recently, our younger generations were not given this choice to make. But still it is hard to decide which values to use in making decisions about the ways of life we want to follow. And all the time our elders are passing away and taking their traditional knowledge with them.

Many of our young people have a very confused idea of what it is to really be an Indian. Even though they are free to learn about their traditions—in school they are even encouraged and taught to do so—many of them just don't seem to want anything to do with our old ways. All the many generations of government and missionary propaganda against our old ways cannot be overcome in a few short years.

778 For instance, many young people have no knowledge about
869 our tribal medicine bundles except to fear them. They don't understand that these bundles are sacred symbols through which our people are meant to be helped and educated. Even the children of people who are keepers of such bundles often know nothing about them, except that they are supposed to keep away. I cannot say that the parents are of any help, either, in cases like this. Perhaps because many parents are

just starting to learn our old ways, too, they don't know enough to teach their children yet. Our young people need a lot of encouragement and guidance to learn about these things and to try some of them.

I recall that when I first started asking my grandmothers about their old ways they sometimes discouraged me and made me feel silly for having such interests. When I first started wearing long skirts and dresses even my own grandmother told me that I should stop. "You look like an old lady," she told me. Even though their belief in these traditions was very strong, they had been made to feel that there was no future in this world for their children and grandchildren if they didn't put these old ways aside.

But once my grandmothers saw that I was sincere in wanting to learn their old ways they were very encouraging. They didn't think any of us younger girls cared about cutting up meat properly to dry, or about putting soles on moccasins so that they wear well. I think it pleased them to know that they had something very special to offer us young people, even if it took a while for them to believe that times had changed enough to make us young people want to learn.

I think history about Indians has often neglected the women. We get the impression that women just did their daily work and drudgery and had nothing to look forward to or talk about. When I was young I used to think that the old-time Indian women were sold and treated like slaves, because that's what the books said. I have found out that among some tribes the women were not too well treated, but among others they were equal to the men and among some they even served as chiefs and leaders.

Actually, when you judge the traditional lives of my grandmothers by modern values you could, indeed, say that they had hard lives and were much mistreated. The modern woman would rebel against carrying loads of firewood home in the middle of a cold winter while her husband sat inside the house

high horn on the traditional-style woman's saddle. If the mother was doing work around her camp she would hook the strap to some tree branch, where the baby could sleep in the shade. 854

Inside the tipi, or house, my grandmothers made little hammocks to keep their babies out of the way. I used this method with my kids. I tied two parallel cords to adjoining walls so that they hung down like a garden swing. Then I folded a blanket back and forth between the two cords so that it looked like a miniature hammock. You could make it more simple by taking a rectangular piece of canvas and hemming the two long sides so that you can run a cord through each hem. Then tie the cord ends to walls. In a tipi you tie the cords from one tipi pole to another.

The baby is placed inside this little hammock while laced in its moss bag. I usually put a stick across the two sides of the hammock, to spread it out and make sure there is enough breathing room. I try to tie the hammock over my bed, in case it should ever fall down. Also, I take it down at night and let the baby sleep with me or in its own bed. It isn't in my way during the nighttime, and my grandmothers say that bad spirits sometimes come down the tipi poles in the night and try to take babies away. Many times I have quieted screaming babies by putting them in the hammock and swinging it until they fell asleep.

About the time a baby becomes a toddler it is given the first lessons in respect. Every family used to have an altar in their tipi, and the kids had to be taught from the start not to play around it. Parents preferred to frighten their kids away from bad habits rather than spank them. They might get their kids to become scared of furry objects. Whenever the toddler would try to get into something it wasn't supposed to, the mother would put a piece of fur over it and the kid would stay back out of fear. 869 861

When children got to the age where they could understand 861

861 some things, the parents would always tell them things like: "Don't go away from the tipi or the wolf will come and take you." They said: "Don't go around at night because that's when the ghosts are out and they will come for you." Things 855 like this kept the little kids right close to home. If the mother had to go somewhere on foot, she would carry along her toddler wrapped in a blanket and worn on her back. Compared to modern mothers, my grandmothers really indulged in their children. The kids grew up in the midst of the daily household, so they learned family values and customs naturally.

867 My grandmother told me the following story about her childhood:

"I was the youngest of my mother's children. She wanted us to grow old, so she encouraged us to follow her advice. She taught us from the start to respect old people. Because my father was a medicine man we had a lot of old people as visi- 867 tors. Sometimes my mother would give me a piece of meat and tell me, 'Go ask that old lady to chew your food for you.' 264 This would be some special old lady—one with a lot of 888 power to doctor or put up Sun Dances. She would chew my meat and then give it to me to swallow. This was a blessing 867 for me, just like getting part of her life. Whenever we had any spare change we were taught to give it to old people like that.

869 "Because a lot of holy people always came to visit my 784 father we were taught not to fool around near them. These people who have spiritual powers are required to follow a lot of rules. We were never allowed to pass in front of them, especially if they were smoking. These were the rules and we [302] never thought to question them. My father painted his chil- [782] dren and his grandchildren, and he prayed for them, so that no harm would come to them in case they passed in front of him accidentally or did something else against the rules.

was after dark when the last person danced with the sacred Pipe and returned it to the new Owner, bringing the transfer ceremony to a close.

HISTORY OF THE BACKSIDE-TO-THE-FIRE PIPE

Part of the Spirit dwelling within each sacred Bundle is the history of the Bundle and of those who formerly owned it and prayed with it. What I know of this Pipe I learned from my two Teachers, Atsitsina and Mokakin, each of whom had already kept that Bundle.

It is called the Backside-to-the-Fire Pipe because the sacred Stems are placed within the Bundle in the direction opposite that of Pipes in other Bundles. Our other sacred Pipe Bundles must always hang on a west wall, facing Sun's first light from the east, and the Pipestems must be placed in the Bundle so that the mouthpieces point to the south, where the lodge fire is. But the tradition of the Backside Bundle calls for the mouthpieces to point North; thus the "backside" of the Pipes face the fire. This is according to spiritual directions given to the Pipe's first Keeper.

White Horn, an uncle of the ceremony's present leader, had been the first Blood man to own this Pipe. He had it transferred to him by Drum, a member of the Sarsi tribe. Although the Sarsi People belong to a different language group, they share a long alliance and dependence with our People, and have adopted most of our religious and cultural customs. Thus, their Medicine Pipe Bundles are similar to ours. The main Stem of the Bundle looks like a Medicine Pipe from the Crow People, so the Bundle may originally have come from them.

White Horn had the Bundle for many years, and because he was so fond of it his family decided to bury it with him when he died. Before the burial, one of our head men, Day Chief, was instructed in a dream to take the main Pipe from

person on the reserve to let the cattle graze there. This practice began when Eagle Bear accepted the first four-dollar payment. That was in the year number 1904 when I was born. Small Priest [the People's name for Father Dusette] baptized me, but he didn't give me a name. I don't know why I wasn't called after my father, Dog Child. When I was not many days old, I was called First Rid. and I grew up with that name.

When I was a little bit old-personlike [when first active as a child], my father taught me to ride. This was during the number four winter of my life. There was still a lot of horseback riding then and a lot of travois for transportation. Very few had slim-wheelers [buggies]. I was tied on a horse, and the horse was tied to a picket. Sometimes I used to go to sleep on the horse. My mother made a pad saddle out of blue jeans and stuffed with big-head fur [sheep's wool]. There were stirrups at that time; I used to see them, they were made of wood. But my stirrups were rawhide thongs, which fit my young feet better.

I grew up in the land of the Men with Many Wives [Cardston, Alberta, is a Mormon town]. My father was a hunter and he had many rifles; a slim-gum-arrow [.30/30 caliber]; a double-barrelled hunting gun; also a Number 22, called a gopher rifle. And he was one of the first to own a Number 303 rifle [.303 caliber]. He set traps for coyote, beaver, and muskrat.

My father made me eat all kinds of deer. The People of the long-ago liked to eat the part of the mother animal that the baby animal sucked on. The only thing they didn't eat is the milk of the big white ?·ads [mountain sheep]. I heard that this milk is very bitter.

When I killed an elk, my father showed me they have seven nest lumps [nipples], not four or six or eight. He showed me that badgers have blood clots on their ribs. We sprinkled gun powder on the badger's blood and from looking at our reflection in the blood we knew how long we were going to live. My father saw from his

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reflection that he was going to be an old man. That is why he was very aggressive. He knew he would not die before reaching old age. Myself, I did not look into the badger blood.

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Out on the plains there is a ridge, a place that we call Writing-On. That is where my father went camping and trapping and shooting. He never trapped less than 200 muskrats; usually he got around 500, 600, or 700. I know my father once trapped 1,500 muskrats. In the beginning he could sell the pelts for 15 cents each. Later he was able to get 20 cents, then 25 cents, 30 cents—always more as time went on. When old age forced him to quit trapping, he got 75 cents for each muskrat pelt.

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My father was in the Black Seizers Society. Once, when I went to a Black Seizers dance, they painted my face. [Painting someone's face during the ceremony of a society or Bundle makes that person a spiritual associate of the society or Bundle.] My friends, Wore White Pants [Harry Spear Chief] and Tony, the son of Crane Chief, were also painted. Their fathers, like mine, were members of the Black Seizers, as well as elder comrades in our own young man's society, the All Brave Dog Society. ["Elder comrades" were once members of the young society; they taught the songs and ceremonies to the young members.]

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My father taught me the life of the Black Seizers, the ones who tear our clothes. [The Seizers had the traditional right to demand food or other donations from the People in camp during the society's gatherings. If refused, the Seizers could tear up their clothing. They were not particularly popular for this.]

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My father made me join the Braves Society and he taught me how they dance. I grew up and carried on both the Indian Way of life and the white Way. . . .

One person alone didn't educate me. Ki-soum taught me how to work the sweat lodges for the Horns Society. Natosina taught me how the Horns Society operates. So also did Three Guns

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George First Rider, dressed as a minipoka, in 1919.

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and Sun Old Man, the wise one of the North Blackfoot Indians. On the North Blackfoot Reserve, me and Berry Eater [Amos Leather] taught each other songs about Medicine Pipes and the Holy Lodge.

Among the Blood Indians, I learned transfer ceremonies from Black Eagle and Dog Ribs. I

[p. 233-B]

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Dog Child and his wife, the mother of George First Rider, in 1939. (Esther Goldfrank)

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took them both for my grandfathers. I know all the Horns Society Bundles. At one time or another they were all transferred to me: the Bundle with a Rattle, the Associate Staff, the Leader's Headdress, the Yellow-Ochred Staff, the Swan Staff, the Staff with an Armband, the

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Meet the Old People of Today

SikskiAki and I asked a few of the Old People living on the Blood Reserve to comment on the past, present, and future of our Old Ways. Most people on the Blood Reserve have at least some respect for their traditions and for those who are still trying to follow them. Nevertheless, few know how the Old Ways really were. Most of our People today were taken from their parents and placed in boarding schools at an age when their minds were forming permanent patterns. In the schools, their contacts with the Old Ways, both spiritual and physical, were always discouraged and sometimes forcibly severed. By the time they left the schools, the children had been taught to judge life according to the standards set by white society, standards that were meaningless to their parents who lived simple, natural, spiritual lives. This forced-separation of children from their families and culture continued until just a few years ago, but it had already broken the Spirit of our Old Ways in the daily lives of our People.

OUR HEAD CHIEF, JIM SHOT-ON-BOTH-SIDES

My father had the Long-Time Medicine Pipe for many years. He taught me to treat our home like

[p.332-A]

a church. Every morning and every night he made incense. He asked for life in his prayers. He prayed for all of us. . . . At the beginning of summer he would be really happy when he first heard thunder. That is when he opened his Bundle. He would butcher a cow and use it to feed those who came to the ceremony. We had a good life because our home was very holy. 969 [782] [778] [796] [574]

Jim Shot-on-Both-Sides is the present head chief of the Blood People. The Bloods have had five chiefs from his family over the past hundred years. His father, old Shot-on-Both-Sides, was the [redacted]f Crop-Eared Wolf, who was the adopted son of old Red Crow, who was the nephew of Pinukwiim. All of them were head chiefs. 622

Except for one two-year term, Jim Shot-on-Both-Sides has been head chief since the death of his father in 1958.

The Old People still respect me the same way they respected my father. I don't know about the young people. For instance, when we went down to Ottawa, they put me first in everything. Before every meeting began I was asked to pray. We had meetings at different places and I prayed at each of them. I prayed so that we would get what we went for. 622 554 [782]

lot of young people are thinking about trying to join in." 000

Mark was greatly disappointed when the Long-Time Pipe was sold to the Provincial Museum. His brother-in-law, George Long-Time Squirrel, wished to become Keeper of the ancient Pipe, so he sent Mark to see John Red Crane, because the two were related. Mark said, "It sure [439] 778 432 829

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Mark Old Shoes, in the center, as the head Weather Dancer during the Medicine Lodge ceremonies. In the foreground is the Old Man, who was then his Teacher for the sacred duty. On the other side of him is old Heavy Head, dressed and painted just as he was some sixty years earlier when he underwent the self-torture. Each Medicine Lodge dancer must dress the same way as first instructed by his Teacher. Thus, the Old Man and Mark are both wearing shirts, with blankets wrapped around their waists. (Mark Old Shoes Collection) [869]

[p.336-A]